

MORRIS, George W., Jr, Capt, DATA
MPCCB/B. Mack/2816/adp/11 July 78

14 JUL 1978

MPCC

Status Review in the Case of Captain George W. Morris, Jr.,
DATA

BQ USAF/MPCC

1. Preface: A status review in the above case was held in accordance with Chapter 10, Title 37, United States Code, by the undersigned at the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. In determining whether the missing in action status should reasonably be continued or terminated by a determination of death, reconsideration was given to the facts and circumstances as warranted by the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement, 27 January 1973, the general repatriation of prisoners of war, the cessation of United States involvement in hostilities in Southeast Asia, and the lapse of time without information.

2. Discussion: The review and reconsideration of all the facts and circumstances (summarized and attached hereto) resulted in a determination that it is not possible to conclusively establish the member's ultimate fate. However, the likelihood that he is still alive may no longer reasonably be considered since he has not been repatriated, sufficient time has elapsed during which it is believed some word would have been received if he had survived, and he cannot otherwise be accounted for. Accordingly, with respect to the above and in the absence of any information to support a presumption of his continued survival, it is concluded that he may now no longer reasonably be presumed to be alive.

3. Recommendation: It is recommended that, pursuant to the authority contained in Section 555, Title 37, United States Code, an administrative determination be made that Captain George W. Morris, Jr., DATA was killed in action. It is further recommended that the casualty report issued as a result of this action include a statement that the determination was made following a subsequent review of all available information and, as provided by and for the purpose of the law, the date death is presumed to have occurred is the date the Secretary's designee approves this recommendation. Death is held to have occurred while in a pay, flying pay, and duty status.

4. Pursuant to authority delegated to you by the Secretary of the Air Force under the provisions of Chapter 10, Title 37, United States Code, request your review and approval.

Signed

JACK H. TOMES, Colonel, USAF
Reviewing Officer

Signed

JOSEPH L. WEJROCH, JR., Colonel, USAF
Reviewing Officer

Signed

BERNARD W. BOSHOFEN, Colonel, USAF
Reviewing Officer

3 Atch

1. Summary of Facts and Circumstances
2. Disclosure of Decision Form (Father) w/1 Atch
3. Disclosure of Decision Form (Mother)

SUMMARY OF FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Captain Mark A. Peterson, pilot, and Captain George W. Morris, Jr., copilot, comprised the crew of an OV-10A aircraft.
2. The crew departed Nakhon Phanom Airport, Thailand, at 1320, 27 January 1973, on a forward air controller (FAC) visual reconnaissance mission over South Vietnam. The mission progressed as planned until approximately 1600, at which time the crew witnessed the downing of a Navy F-4 aircraft, and saw the two crew members eject successfully. They spotted the landing location of the two downed crew members, and assumed control of immediate search efforts. There were scattered clouds at 3,500 feet and six miles visibility, which deteriorated to 400 scattered, 2,000 overcast. Voice contact could not be established with either downed member, and the adverse weather conditions impeded visual reconnaissance. Captain Peterson instructed the crew of another FAC aircraft to remain at higher altitude while he and his copilot attempted to establish visual contact with the downed members or to locate their parachutes. During their second low-altitude pass over the search area, enemy fire directed at their aircraft was seen by crew members of the FAC holding high, and three quick warnings were given to Captains Morris and Peterson. Before evasive action could be taken, enemy ordnance struck the right engine of the OV-10A, sending it into an uncontrolled spin. One of the crewmen was heard to say, "We're hit! Eject!", and seconds later at approximately 1620, their parachutes were seen to fully deploy. The parachutes landed approximately six miles north of Quang Tri, South Vietnam. Voice contact was established with one of the downed members, who was heard to say, "I'm going to be captured! I'm going to be captured!", but when asked to identify himself, he failed to respond. Search and rescue personnel were already in the area, but because of deteriorating weather conditions and oncoming darkness, visual contact could not be made. Electronic surveillance was maintained during the night, and the search continued until 1830, 29 January 1973. Intermittent beeper signals were received, but personnel reporting the beepers felt they were originated by enemy forces in the area. The organized search was terminated when voice contact could not be reestablished with either missing crewman nor could other evidence be uncovered on which to base further search.

3. Lieutenant Commander Philip A. Kientzler, one of the downed Navy crewmen, taken captive and released during Operation HOMECOMING, provided the following information during his debriefing. Commander Kientzler witnessed the downing of the OV-10A aircraft, and saw both crew members eject with good parachutes. While Captains Morris and Peterson were descending in their parachutes, the officer in charge of Commander Kientzler's captors shouted to about 30 armed natives and they began shooting at both officers with AK-47 automatic rifles. Additional ground fire was directed at them from other nearby areas. Commander Kientzler was then roughly prodded into a thatched hut and did not see the parachutes land or learn anything later concerning the downed crewmen. He further advised that, as he descended, his parachute was riddled with bullets, and he received a severe leg wound. The officer in charge tried to kill Commander Kientzler when he was captured and again after the aerial search activity subsided. Both times the villagers and militia restrained the officer. Commander Kientzler last saw his own crew member parallel with him in his parachute and believes he landed approximately 400 yards away. He was later told by one of the guards that another guard had killed his friend. During a forced march, the trails Commander Kientzler and his guards used were subjected to B-52 bombings and South Vietnamese artillery shellings. The trails they traveled would also have been used by Captains Morris and Peterson had they survived the incident, thus exposing them to extremely dangerous bombardments and further minimizing their chance for survival. Neither Commander Kientzler's crewman nor the OV-10A crew members showed up in a prisoner of war camp and Commander Kientzler believes they were killed at the time the incident occurred.

4. No accounting for Captains Morris and Peterson was ever received from the North Vietnamese government or its allies, and their names never appeared in the prisoner communication channels which proved to be reliable. In accordance with the provisions of Section 555, Title 37, USC, the missing crew members were continued in a missing status at the expiration of the initial 12-month period of absence. It was the finding of the board that this was an appropriate case for administrative determinations of death; however, such determinations could not be made because the restraining order that prohibited status changes was in effect at the time. (See class action suit: McDonald vs McLucas)

xxxxx MPC

23 AUG 1978

Status Review in the Case of Captain George W. Morris, Jr.,
DATA (Your Ltr, 14 Jul 78)

HQ AFMPC/MPCC

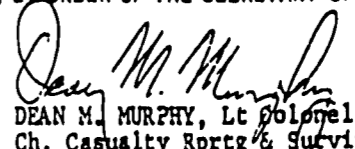
Pursuant to authority delegated to me by the Secretary of the Air Force under the provisions of Section 555, Chapter 10, Title 37, United States Code, I have reviewed the case of subject officer and find that he can no longer reasonably be presumed to be alive. His missing in action status is therefore terminated and it is administratively determined that he was killed in action. The casualty report issued as a result of this action will include a statement that this finding was made following a review of all available information. Death is presumed to have occurred on the date I have signed this letter. The officer was in a pay, flying pay, and duty status.

Signed

L. W. SVENDSEN, JR.
Major General, USAF
Asst DCS/Manpwr and Pers
for Mil Pers

1 Atch
HQ AFMPC/MPCC Ltr, 14 Jul 78
w/2 Atch

1981-01

REPORT OF CASUALTY		1. REPORT NUMBER AND TYPE	2. DATE PREPARED
		962 - Final	25 Aug 78
3. SERVICE IDENTIFICATION (Name, Social Security Number, Grade or Rate, Component, Branch and Organization), (MOS, NYC)			
MORRIS, George William Jr, DATA Captain, Reserve, USAF - 23 Tac Air Spt Sq, APO San Francisco 96310 AFSC: 1141E			
4. CASUALTY STATUS a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BATTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NON-BATTLE b. COMMENCED TOUR DATE: 13 Nov 72			
c. STATUS: <input type="checkbox"/> DEATH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KIA <input type="checkbox"/> MISSING <input type="checkbox"/> MISSING IN ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> CAPTURED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
d. DATE: * e. PLACE: South Vietnam (01) (Specify)			
f. CAUSE & CIRCUMSTANCES Co-pilot - OV-10 Aircraft			
5. a. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH		b. RACE	c. SEX
16 Sep 46 - Baltimore MD		Caucasian	Male
		d. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE	
		Methodist	
6. DATE AND PLACE OF LAST ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY IN CURRENT STATUS AND HOME OF RECORD AT TIME			
13 Nov 69 - Lackland AFB TX - Alhambra CA			
7a. PAY GRADE	b. BASIC PAY	c. INCENTIVE/ADDITIONAL PAY	d. CHECK IF APPLICABLE
0-3		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CREW <input type="checkbox"/> MESSENGER
8. DUTY STATUS			
Active Duty - On Duty			
9. INTERESTED PERSONS (Name, Address, Relationship)		DATE OF RECORD OF EMERGENCY DATA FORM: 14 Nov 72	
Mr George W Morris Sr		father(2,3)**	
Mrs Elizabeth Morris		mother(2,3)**	
10. REPORT FOR VA TO FOLLOW <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		11. REPORTING COMMAND AGENCY AND DATE REPORT RECEIVED IN DEPARTMENT	
		NOT USED - SECTION 555, TITLE 37, USC APPLIES	
12. PRIOR SERVICE DATA <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO			
13. REMARKS *Under the provisions of Section 555, Title 37, USC and upon direction and delegation by the Secretary of the Air Force, the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel for Military Personnel finds this individual to be dead. He was officially reported missing in action on 27 Jan 73. He was continued in this status until 23 Aug 78, the date death is presumed to have occurred for the purpose of termination of pay and allowances, settlement of accounts, and payment of death gratuities as stated in Section 555, Title 37, USC. No further information has been received concerning the fate of this individual since the date of his missing status.			
SGLI: BY LAW LUMP SUM \$20,000			
NOTE: THIS FORM MAY BE USED TO FACILITATE THE PAYMENT OF COMMERCIAL INSURANCE, OR IN THE SETTLEMENT OF ANY OTHER CLAIM IN CONNECTION WITH THE SERVICE OF THIS INDIVIDUAL.			
FOOTNOTES: 1. Adult next of kin. 2. Beneficiary for gratuity pay in event there is no surviving spouse as designated on record. 3. Beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances-as designated on record.			
14. DISTRIBUTION		15. BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE	
NOT USED		 DEAN M. MURPHY, Lt Colonel, USAF Ch, Casualty Rptg & Survivor Assistance	

DD FORM 1300, 1 MAR 60, WHICH IS OBSOLETE.

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